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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Holy God, You make the clouds Your chariot and walk upon the wind. We see Your works in the rising of the sun and in its setting. For the beauty of the Earth and the glory of the skies, we give You praise.

Today, make our lawmakers heirs of peace, demonstrating that they are Your children as they strive to find common ground. May they take pleasure in doing Your will, knowing that by so doing they are fulfilling Your purposes in our world.

Lord, You are never far from us but often we are far from You, so show us Your ways and teach us Your paths. Thank You that Your mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who come to You with reverence. May Your glory endure forever. We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The time will be equally divided and

controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Following morning business the Senate will resume consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act.

The Senate will recess today from 12:30 until 2:15 to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

We will work on amendments to the Defense bill today. Everyone will be notified when votes are scheduled.

### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today we are going to continue work on the Defense bill. It is really an important measure, and that is an understatement. It safeguards this Nation. It ensures our troops have the resources and training they need. It provides for military families who support our fighting men and women. This is a serious bill, and it deserves serious debate—not to be bogged down by unrelated political issues.

For example, this legislation encompasses a lot of issues, including a pay raise for members of our Armed Forces. It authorizes dozens of special pay rates and bonuses, such as bonus payments for servicemembers who see combat or who are stationed overseas.

This important legislation also includes robust and far-reaching provisions to combat the scourge of sexual assault in the military, including changes that would ensure perpetrators are punished and victims are protected. Senators LEVIN, GILLIBRAND, MCCASKILL, and others have done exceptionally good work to confront this problem. As we build on their work, there are additional amendments concerning military sexual assault the Senate needs to consider.

The Senate must also consider amendments relating to the Guantanamo Bay detention center. Everyone is aware that we cannot complete this bill until we vote on the sexual assault and Guantanamo provisions.

I know this bill has a lot of provisions people would like to change. Frankly, we won't be able to change a lot of it. The committee did really good work in coming up with the bill. The two issues I have just talked about, though, must have votes. I would accept the language in the Defense bill as it relates to Guantanamo; I think it is a significant improvement. But my Republican colleagues want to have an opportunity to change that, and I understand that. That is why I said that should be the first measure we vote on. I have said that more than once, and I say it again.

The matter dealing with sexual assault is a controversial matter, and we have to have a vote on that. We have to do that. That is why I said that is the second most important issue we deal with in this bill.

Why couldn't we get these two important issues out of the way? I am speaking only for myself. If we have votes on those two measures, I think the bill would be ready to go to conference. I know people don't like to hear that, but I think that is, in fact, the case.

The time, effort, and wisdom led by Senator LEVIN to come up with a bill, working with the new ranking member Senator INHOFE has been a labor of love for both of them. But these two issues need to be resolved on the Senate floor. I ask that it be done.

I asked last night by unanimous consent to get these things done, but there was objection from my Republican colleagues. So if we can't vote even on these amendments to these two crucial issues—and I know there are other issues, but no one can in any way disparage what I have just said, that these are two very important issues. Everyone, I think, agrees they have to be considered before we can complete the work on this underlying legislation. So if we can't get these two votes done, how are we going to address any of the other issues we need to work on?

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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